



“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). Matthew 1:23 (NIV)

Advent = “Wait-Training.”

Most of us think of the season of Advent as the time we get ready to celebrate the birth of Christ. It’s frequently our busiest time of the year, juggling shopping, year-end tasks & projects, and—in a normal year—attending a multitude of holiday parties! Oh, how things have changed!

Historically, the season of Advent has focused not on rushing around and getting things ready for Christmas Day, but on setting aside time to intentionally slow down and wait. It doesn’t come naturally to most of us, hence “wait-training.” Throw in a bout with the novel coronavirus on the literal day Advent 2020 started, and you’ve got a glimpse of our family’s Advent experience, so far.

Honestly, it feels like these last three quarters of 2020 have been an advent of sorts. We’ve been waiting for a vaccine, for the latest public health directives and weekly COVID-19 reports. Sheltering in place has dominated our year. Doesn’t it feel like, since March, all we’ve done is wait?

That’s why Advent 2020 is so important. We have to shift the focus of our waiting from the news—either domestically or from Armenia & Artsakh—to Christ’s coming. Quite a few of us have felt abandoned by the Lord in 2020. We’ve been disappointed and wondered if He really cares.

We know better. We know His promises. We know His Word. But it’s been tough.

That’s why Advent 2020 is so important. In these remaining days before Christmas, we need to set our focus on *Immanuel*, *God with us*. God not only spoke the promise of His presence and salvation, He sent His One and only Son. He backed up His

promise not just with action, but with **incarnation!** He became a human being, to be “with us.”

He has been *Immanuel* throughout 2020 and will continue to be until we see Him face to face at His return or He calls us home. The real question is how can we experience *Immanuel* until then.

1) Intentionally pull aside for 20 minutes, DAILY, to read and reread the Christmas passages of Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. Ask Jesus to be present with you, right now, by the Holy Spirit and ... **wait**. 2) Ask your loved ones how they long to experience Christ’s presence. Write it down and pray this for them daily. Then, **wait** until after Christmas and ask how He answered your prayers. 3) Find a 5-minute block to **wait** silently on the Lord. Sit, stand, kneel—I don’t recommend laying down! Simply, silently, **wait**. Don’t speak. Don’t pray. Listen. **Wait**.

This won’t come easily. But we need this “wait-training” desperately. It’s humbling to wait on the Lord, especially when you’re not exactly sure what’s coming. But it’s also super-exciting!!! Just think about how our children anticipate opening their presents!

May the *Immanuel* be your blessing this Christmas and we launch into the New Year!



Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused physical, emotional, and mental health problems. People are experiencing panic/anxiety attacks from worrying about the virus. We need to start shifting our negative thoughts into positive thinking, gratitude, and prayer. The more we pray, the more we strengthen our faith. God is our creator; he delights in us recognizing him as an all powerful God, and he will be by our side as we deal with this pandemic.

2 Timothy 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline.

The Lord is our hiding place. Whatever the future may bring, we know that our Lord Jesus will never leave us or forsake us. Let us pray for divine protection and ask that the blood of Jesus will cover and protect us and our families.

James 1:6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

We all need the protection of the Lord more now than we have ever needed Him in our lives. We need His perfect peace. We need to be praying over our families that no evil or plague will come near our homes or our family members. For those who are experiencing trials right now, may they see God's hand and His protection regardless of present circumstances. In Jesus's name, Amen.

●●●●● Sela Ghazarian



The **FAPC Annual Congregational Meeting** took place on after the Worship Service on December 13, 2020, the Third Sunday of Advent. Communicant Members of the Congregation elected **Rita Barsamian, Simon Kalebjian, Ando and Kinsey Sivas, and Charles "Chuck" Berberian** to the Board of Deacons (Deacon Class of 2023) and Paul Haroutunian to the Session (Elder Class of 2023). The Membership also received and reviewed the 2021 Annual Budget of the Church as adopted by the Session. The Session extends heartfelt thanks to the Committee on Nominations (Edward Esajian and Dr. Hagop Afarian (Co-Chairs), Sandra Marashian, Kim Haroutunian, and Maral Afarian), the Committee on Budget and Finance (Sue Garabedian, Chair), and the Committee on Personnel (Ronald Statler, Esq., Chair) for their tireless efforts throughout the past year.



A special thanks to **Stephen Goodale, the Youth Group, Maryvonna Gagliardi, Susan Ruiz, Harry Torosian, and Harry's team** for beautifully decorating and setting up the Sanctuary!



We recieved a letter in the mail from **Pastor B.T. Lewis**:

Dear Pastor Greg and the First Armenian Presbyterian Church family,

Thank you so much for inviting us to join you in fellowship and worship in September. We appreciate your hospitality and generous spirit. May God continue to bless you and your ministry locally and abroad. We join you in prayer for Armenia.

Pastor B.T. Lewis and the family



Georgia Mickaelian sent a heart-warming e-mail we thought should be shared!:

Thank you ALL for your PRAYERS

Thank you to each and everyone that have kept me in prayer. It's been a long battle and I am given the strength through your prayers. I thank GOD for my wonderful church family and loving friends every day.

HE is the only one that can HEAL and I pray that there is a cure for all who are suffering with this disease. GOD'S BLESSINGS TO ALL!

Lovingly,

Georgia L. Mickaelian

Please note any donations intended for 2020 giving must be postmarked no later than December 31 for a 2020 deduction.

Any donations received after that date will be applied towards 2021***



Tammy (Bedrosian) Shegerian was featured in the Business Journal Executive Profile on December 11, 2020. Tammy is the President and Chief Executive Officer of ERI (Electronic Recyclers International).



If you shop on Amazon, don't forget to link FAPC with AmazonSmile, so that the church will receive a donation from Amazon, at no extra cost to you. Happy shopping! www.smile.amazon.com



Our Condolences:

Ross D. Garabedian, a child of our Church, passed away on December 1, 2020 at the age of 78. A native of Fresno, Ross was educated at Fresno High School and served six years in the California Army National Guard. In the 1960s, he joined his parents in Blythe, California near the Arizona border and began a career in agricultural commodities, working for George Arakelian Farms, Papazian Distributing, Jack Stires Company, Lucky Strike Brokerage, Ernie Strahm & Sons, and V.H. Azhderian & Company. He also operated his own firm, Ross Garabedian Sales, in the mid-1980s. Ross was preceded in death by his parents, August and Doris (Paul) Garabedian; his grandparents, Ralph and Ann Paul; and his uncle, Albert Paul. Ross is survived by his aunt and uncle, Frances and James Hastings of Pasadena, and many dear cousins and friends.



Margaret Ann (Tayian) Harrison, beloved sister in Christ and the most senior communicant member of FAPC, passed away on December 6, 2020 at the age of 100. A native of Fowler, Margaret was educated at Winchell Elementary, Longfellow Junior High, and Fresno Technical High School in Fresno. While working for California Drapery House, she met and married Austin G. "Pete" Harrison of Brookshire, Texas. Pete's parents, George and Rosa Gureghian Harrison were pioneering members of Armenian-American Community of Waller County, just west of Houston. At the time of their 1945 marriage, Pete was a graduate of Texas A & M University and a decorated U.S. Marine Corps Officer. At the end of World War II, the young couple relocated to Oceanside, California, Quantico, Virginia, and eventually San Francisco, where their children were born. By the mid-1950s, the family relocated to Fresno, where Pete and Margaret owned and operated HARCO Furniture and HARCO Sleep and Carpet Shop and Pete was the commanding officer of a U.S. Marine Corp Reserve contingent. Widowed in 1975, Margaret was a faithful member of the Young Women's Society of Fidelis, served as a Deacon and Ruling Elder, and was a member of the FAPC Third Phase Building Committee (which constructed the Fellowship Hall), and the Centennial Commemorative Committee (1992-1997). She was also a gifted seamstress who volunteered at Fresno Community Hospital for many years. Margaret was preceded in death by her dear husband, Austin; parents Sarkis and Isabel Tayian; and brother Berge Tayian. She is survived by her son, Keith Austin Harrison, and his wife Patricia, and her daughter, Deborah Kazarian, and her husband Melvin; grandchildren Andrew Kazarian and his wife, Gia; Charles Kazarian; Lauren Hallaian and her husband, Christian; Dr. Katherine Harrison-Chen and her husband, Albert; Dr. Philip Harrison and his wife, YiYi; and five great-grandchildren.

2020 OCTOBER FALL FESTIVAL





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